



ESOL NI - E-zine Sept/Oct 2024

Section 1: General Education opportunities to ESOL learners Section 2: News and Updates - ESOL sector (teachers/volunteers) and stakeholders in Northern Ireland

1. General Education opportunities to ESOL learners

- **Belfast Met's new Millfield ESOL Hub:**

New ESOL Hub

The College will be creating a brand new ESOL hub located in **Millfield** (weblink). This campus is right in the centre of Belfast near Castle Court. We will have a new dedicated space for ESOL that will have classrooms, office space and student facilities.

<https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/part-time/esol/> (weblink)



Information available in different languages via link above.

- **New list of community-based classes across NI – compiled by ESOL volunteers Johanne Martin and Angela Russell**

Updated list of free English classes in NI (as per 20th Sept update – Word document enclosed to this E-zine email) - by Church groups and community & voluntary groups - please share.


- **ESOL Element – Belfast Met English language programme for young people 16 to 24 from RAS backgrounds – places still available – follow the details below to apply – limited spaces available.**

We have limited spaces available on our **ESOL Element** course in the Belfast Met Girdwood Campus. Applicants must be at a high Entry 2 to Level 1 level of English (subject to online assessment) and must be a Refugee or an Asylum Seeker.

- Transport support to learners (subject to individual needs).
- Individual pastoral support to progression routes.
- This is not an accredited programme.

To apply, please follow the link below:

<https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/course/p01099-ac/esol-elements/> (weblink for application)

A promotional graphic for the ESOL Element programme. It features a photo of two young people, a woman and a man, looking at a laptop. To the right of the photo is a vertical banner with the Belfast Met logo and text: 'Classes starting October 2024', 'Tues/Thurs & Fri (October to December 24)', '9.30am to 12pm', and 'Open to refugees & asylum seekers - ages 16 to 24'. Below the photo is a red box with the text: 'Assessment and Enrolment on the 14th August (Wed) via link to the Belfast Met website for new ESOL students to the college. If you are already enrolled with the Belfast Met, please email ESOL@belfastmet.ac.uk to ensure you are considered for this programme. Selection criteria applies.' To the left of the red box are three icons with bullet points: a bus icon for 'Transport support to learners (subject to individual needs)', a book icon for 'Suitable to intermediate level learners (A2 to B1)', and an apple icon for 'Including ESOL general assessment* and individual pastoral support to progression routes'. At the bottom right is the Belfast Met logo.

- **Applications are open to the STEP Ahead online national ESOL and Employability programme delivered by the World Jewish Relief and British Council – deadline for application 31st October – limited spaces available**

To register or refer a learner, please visit: www.worldjewishrelief.org/stepahead (weblink registration form) or call our freephone: 0800 319 6093 (open Monday to Thursday 9am – 5pm, Friday 9am – 2pm).

English language and employment support for refugees from all backgrounds in the UK. This programme is completely free and delivered online.

All refugees living in the UK, including individuals who have been granted protection under the Immigration Rules, and those who arrived on one of the following schemes can apply to join the pilot:

- Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP scheme)

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[ESOL.NI \(esolwebapp.azurewebsites.net\)](mailto:ESOL.NI@esolwebapp.azurewebsites.net)

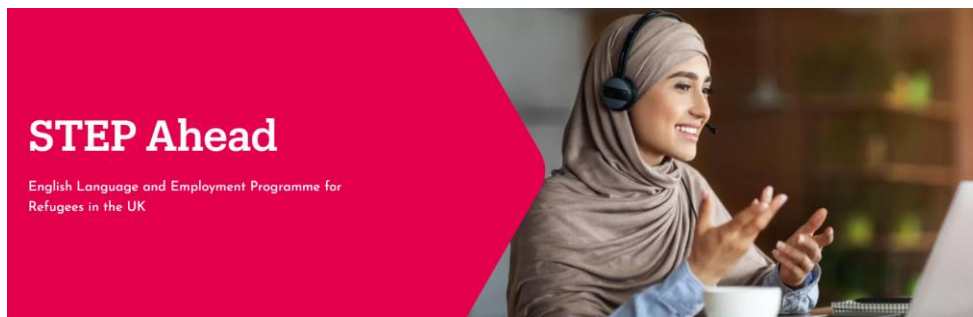
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- Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS scheme)
- Community Sponsorship Mandate Scheme
- Family Reunion
- UK Resettlement Scheme
- Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme
- Granted Refugee status after claiming Asylum

STEP Ahead has opened for registration week commencing 14th October and is on track for teaching to start at the end of November. During the pilot, participants will receive 12-weeks employability support and 10-weeks of intensive digital ESOL lessons (3 times per week). Registration on STEP Ahead is voluntary, complementing existing English language and employment support services.

Registration deadline: 31st October 2024

Email: stepahead@worldjewishrelief.org



- **STEP Ukraine intensive online programme is still open for registrations for the term starting in December 2024 – by World Jewish Relief and British Council:**

This is a different programme from the STEP Ahead programme above mentioned and is only available for Ukrainian migrants who arrived in the UK via the 3 government schemes. During the pilot, participants will receive 12-weeks employability support and 10-weeks of intensive digital ESOL lessons (5 times per week).

For registration and further information, see link below:

<https://www.worldjewishrelief.org/stepukraine/> (weblink for registration)



- **Alternative online Apps and options for free online courses to ESOL learners:**

- **Babel's Blessing: free online and in-person classes**

Babel's Blessing currently offers free online and in-person English classes for migrants, particularly people seeking asylum in the UK. Topics focus on the everyday life, interests and experiences of the students. In recent courses, topics have included travel and transport, nature and the environment, education and comparing on-line and in-person learning. If you are seeking asylum in the UK, please [complete the registration form here](#). (weblink)

- **Independent ESOL [online self-study]**

Courses via the platforms below are free, if the learner selects the audit/sample only, limited or non-accreditation option.

- Check out one of the four **online courses** SRC College developed:

[BRIDGES Project - The Learning Environment](#)

[Coursera](#) weblink (select 'free' course options only, click 'enroll for free', click 'full course, no certificate').

[Future Learn](#) weblink (select course, scroll to bottom of page and select 'continue with limited access')

[BBC Learning English](#) weblink

[Duolingo](#) weblink

- **Queen's University Pathway Opportunity Programme to your young people (going into year 13 or equivalent at college) – 2025/26 applications:**

In the Pathway Programme, young people benefit from a structured series of events designed to aid progression to Queen's University Belfast including 6 one-day events, one session of self-paced coursework and a week-long summer school. Through this process they work within one of 13 Pathway subject areas, learning more about that subject and about university life in general.

Upon successful completion of the programme the young people will benefit from a **guaranteed conditional offer** or a **guaranteed interview** for a course at Queen's within their Pathway subject area. They may also be eligible for a **reduced offer** of up to two A-level grades (or equivalent) **below the standard entry offer to Queen's** (depending on performance on the programme and course selected). This along with a £1000 bursary, transition support and ongoing support while they are at Queen's.

The applications have opened online **Monday 30th September 2024**, and will close on **Friday 25th October 2024** at noon. After receipt of the application, a teacher at your young person's school/college, or member of your organisation (as nominated by the student) will be asked to complete a "technical" reference for the student, confirming information such as postcode, eligibility requirements and GCSE grades/A-Level subjects.

For further details, please see links to promotional materials and information below.

Pathway Presentation Video:

<http://go.qub.ac.uk/POPVideo2025> (weblink)

Digital Brochure:

<http://go.qub.ac.uk/POPDigitalBrochure> (weblink)

Short Pathway Flyer (for Printing double sided on an A4 and distributing):

<http://go.qub.ac.uk/POPFlyer2025> (weblink)

Full PowerPoint Presentation with Speaker Notes:

<http://go.qub.ac.uk/POPFullPresentation2025> (weblink)

PDF of the Presentation:

<http://go.qub.ac.uk/POPSchoolPres2025> (weblink)

Listing of the Courses available to Pathway Students:

<http://go.qub.ac.uk/POPCourses2025> (weblink)

Key Dates Document:

<http://go.qub.ac.uk/POPKeyDates2025> (weblink)

Postcode checker:

<http://go.qub.ac.uk/POPPostcodeChecker2025> (weblink)

Pathway 2025 Poster for printing in A4 or A3 size:

<http://go.qub.ac.uk/POPposter2025> (weblink)

- **Belfast Met's dates for Further Education and Higher Education applications to courses in 2025:**

- **Higher Education** applications open **Wed 27th November 2024**

Higher Education Open Evening Thursday 28th November 2024 (details and times to be confirmed)

- **Further Education** applications open on **Wednesday 22nd January 2025**

Further Education Open Morning Sat 25th January 2025

- **The Belfast Met Student Funding Office has affiliated with Barclays to bring a funding opportunity to our FE students that have dependent children. Please see below a message from Barclays regarding this fund.**

The Barclays Learning Grants programme addresses disadvantaged families' basic needs - giving them the space to think about their future, whilst also helping to unlock their potential through further education. This programme will help adults across the UK to begin their studies, as well as supporting existing students to continue and complete their studies.

Grants of up to £1,000 will be made to help individuals achieve their goals by funding the additional costs associated with education and training, up to £500 of any grant given may be allocated to basic household needs, dependent on household size.

Eligibility Criteria:

Eligible applicants must meet all the following criteria:

1. Have right of residence in the UK.
2. Be an adult with dependent children living with them (aged 18 or under).
3. Be in receipt of means tested benefits OR have household income of £30,000 or less.
4. Be a student currently studying on a course at an affiliated Further Education College (**Belfast Met**).
5. Must be studying a Level 2 (GCSE equivalent) or Level 3 (A Level equivalent) course. Students studying courses higher or lower than these levels may not apply.
6. Be retraining following a period of unemployment OR pursuing education/training with a view to future employment.

If you meet all the above criteria, please complete the following form ([Barclays Interest List](#)) (weblink) to inform us you would like to apply. Official applications are made via an interview with a Student Funding Officer - StudentFunding@belfastmet.ac.uk

Once we confirm that you meet all the above criteria via the info/evidence you supply in the above form we will then set an interview time and date for you to make an official application to Barclays Learning Grant. We will contact you via your **student email account** to set up an appointment.

- **[Belfast Met's Family Action Fund \(Support for Asylum Seekers in Further Education\)](#)**

Family Action Fund is a charity that can aid Asylum Seekers who are Parents and are studying in Further Education with a small grant of up to £250.

Please see Family Actions Educational Grant Criteria below.

Applicants must be both:

- an Asylum Seeker in receipt of an Application Registration Card (ARC).
- a parent/carer with legal responsibility for a child/children aged under 18 years old who live with you.

If you would like to apply to Family Action [click here](#) (weblink)

You can only apply using the above link via a Belfast Met's student account log in.

You can only apply once in a 12-month period, so if you received this support last year you will only be able to reapply if 12 months have passed since your last application.

Once you have completed this form a member of the Student Funding team will submit your application to Family Action, once Family Action have made a decision, they will notify Student Funding and we will then update you the applicant.

Please note: Due to limited funds this year, Family Action have confirmed that **they can only support a maximum of 30 students**. Applications will be assessed on a first come first serve basis using the criteria above and the 12-month rule. Once the Family Action quota of 30 has been reached the application will be closed.

2. News and Updates - ESOL sector (teachers/volunteers) and stakeholders in Northern Ireland

- **Free Information Event for Migrant and Ethnic Minority Communities at Queen's University Belfast**

Please find a flyer enclosed to this E-zine email with information regarding a free information event for Migrant and Minority Ethnic communities. The event will be taking place on **Wednesday 6th November 2024 at the Queen's University Belfast campus**.

Should you wish to enroll then the registration link is as follows:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/information-event-for-migrant-and-minority-ethnic-communities-tickets-1020573602117> (weblink)

- ***The Shape of Safety: a guide to reimagining safety and safeguarding alongside young people with lived experience of mental ill-health, distress and trauma.***

You can find the guide here: <https://files.actbuildchange.com/production/The-Shape-of-Safety-2024.pdf> (weblink)

Created in collaboration with user-led young peoples' organisations Revoke and Voice Collective, this project is the result of a series of workshops centering young people with lived experience of mental ill-health, distress or trauma, who have been failed and disempowered by safeguarding systems. Taking a trauma-informed, anti-oppressive approach, the guide shares and celebrates methods of fostering cultures of safety and care for young people that have been effective. The guide centres lived experience and young peoples' agency in offering principles for better practice, reflective questions and a practitioner's checklist to support organisational change. A new resource for groups working with young people.

Download here: <https://actbuildchange.com/ideas/the-shape-of-safety-a-resource-for-practitioners-working-with-young-people> (weblink)

- **E-visas information - In October last year we told you that the government are planning to get rid of all Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs) on 31st December 2024. Proof of immigration status moves online from 2025 onwards.**

The Government is urging all those across the UK who use a physical immigration document to **take immediate action to transition to an eVisa**, as part of plans to digitise the UK border and immigration system. All visa holders who live in the UK and use a physical immigration document, such as a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), to prove their rights are urged to take action now at [Get access to your eVisa: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) (weblink).

For more information visit gov.uk/eVisa (weblink).

The four national grant funded bodies are today confirmed as **Migrant Help, Citizens Advice Scotland, the Welsh Refugee Council, and Advice NI**, which are all now offering immediate, free support for vulnerable individuals in their transition to an eVisa.

Useful links:

More information on what customers need to do and by when, including for customers who currently hold a physical immigration document, and a full list of grant funded organisations offering support, is available at www.gov.uk/eVisa (weblink). For a full list of organisations, which will be updated over time, can be found at [eVisa: community support for vulnerable people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) (weblink).

- Further information on eVisas can be found at: <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2024/09/18/media-factsheet-evisas-2/> (weblink)
- **We would appreciate sharing the guidance videos** on your platforms and widely with stakeholders [Online immigration status \(eVisa\): help videos - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) (weblink)
- **Download the eVisa Partner Pack.** It includes a factsheet for you and organisations, helpful materials to inform your colleagues/organisations you

may collaborate with of the transition to eVisas including a suggested email to send and drag and drop copy for intranets. Please adapt these resources as you see fit. [Partner Packs](#) (weblink)

You may find useful to check out the guide produced by the **Lancashire Council** explaining step-by-step how to independently apply for an E-Visa (document enclosed to this E-zine email as a reference).

- **NATECLA webinars for the next few weeks (Oct/Nov 2024):**



As a reminder, tickets for all NATECLA webinars cost £5 to members and £30 to non-members. Membership to NATECLA starts from only £20 a year or is free for a year to students or refugees.

All events are bookable [via the new NATECLA Members' Platform.](#) - also accessible to non-members.

Square pegs, round holes: ESOL learners fitting into the FE context- Jeni Prettyman and Johnny Ingham

- **Date:** Friday 18 October 2024
- **Time:** 13:00- 14:15
- **Presenters:** Jeni Prettyman and Johnny Ingham
- **Cost:** £5 for members, £30 for non-members

Adult ESOL programmes don't always fit neatly into the worlds within which they are taught. In our context, adult ESOL students' study in a Further Education college which predominantly provides courses for school leavers.

In many institutions ESOL teachers may be trained in teaching English as a foreign rather than a second/additional language, using materials designed for (monolingual) EFL students overseas, which do not fully meet the needs of our students. In an FE context, our part-time adult ESOL learners' needs also differ significantly from those

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[ESOL NI \(esolwebapp.azurewebsites.net\)](https://esolwebapp.azurewebsites.net)

of younger students on full-time vocational programmes across the college. Language and literacy levels (including digital literacy) can create barriers when trying to use college systems and processes, and ESOL teachers may experience difficulty and frustration shoehorning the needs of their learners into college paperwork expectations, not least due to the nature of language learning vs. vocational learning.

How can we change the landscape to ensure ESOL programmes and ESOL learners receive the tuition, recognition and support they deserve? Come along to our webinar to share how ESOL fits into your worlds and to hear about some of the work we've done at our college to raise the profile of our department and make changes so that our world fits us better.

[Find out more and book](#) (weblink)

Unlocking English vocabulary: Long-term memory strategies- Marie Lea Demolliens

- **Date:** Friday 1 November 2024
- **Time:** 16:00- 17:15
- **Presenters:** Marie-Lea Demolliens
- **Cost:** £5 for members, £30 for non-members

This webinar will equip teachers with powerful strategies to enhance their students' English vocabulary retention. You will get the opportunity to explore key memory concepts, discover effective chunk learning techniques with live demos, and explore interactive activities to make vocabulary teaching more engaging and effective in your ESOL classes. Join us to unlock the potential of digital activities and lively vocabulary games in enhancing your learners' memory.

[Find out more and book](#) (weblink)

Using study diaries to explore the autonomy of lower-proficiency ESOL learners- Matthew Ashcroft

- **Date:** Thursday 14 November 2024
- **Time:** 16:00- 17:15
- **Presenter:** Matthew Ashcroft
- **Cost:** £5 for members, £30 for non-members

How can we understand our students when language is a barrier? How can we help students develop their own voice? We often have preconceptions about our students' experiences both inside and outside of class. A diary as a written expression of thoughts, feelings and experience can reveal a lot. However, there are challenges in

doing this with lower-proficiency learners. This workshop will outline a process of using study diaries with these learners and reveal some of the things learned about group learners and how this can benefit us as a teaching community.

[Find out more and book](#) (weblink)